

A New Chapter in Evangelism

A Prophetic Word from Pastor Steve Meeks

Thesis: By the grace of the Lord, we are starting a new chapter in reaching others with the love of God (evangelism).

Text: 1 John 1:1-4

Today, I want to talk about **A New Chapter in Evangelism**. It fits in with our word for the year, **Share the Story**.

God gives gifted men and women to the body for the equipping of the saints for their works of service.

Ephesians 4:11–13 (NIV84) 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1. **We believe in team ministry because it is modeled here in this passage (Ephesians 4:11-13) with gifted men and women working together.**
 - a. See also Acts 13:1-4 (NIV84) 1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.
2. **The purpose of these gifted men and women is “to prepare God’s people for [their] works of service” (Ephesians 4:12).**
 - a. Titles aren’t the most important thing.
 - b. What happens downstream from the gifted person is what counts.
3. **One of the gifted ministers mentioned here is prophet.**
 - a. Prophetic ministry helps us to hear the current word of the Lord.
 - b. Prophetic ministry results in people growing in their capacity to hear the Lord.
 - c. Prophetic ministry helps the body to be built up and to grow up in Christ.
 - d. **Inspirational prophetic ministry** builds up, stirs up, and binds up.

- i. *1 Corinthians 14:3 (NIV84)* 3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.
 - ii. All believers are encouraged to learn to hear the voice of the Lord and to speak forth inspirational prophecy.
 - e. **Directional prophecy** helps us to know what the Lord is saying in real time and calls for a response.
 - i. Directional prophetic words for the church are submitted to leadership where it is discerned, tested, and lived into.
 - f. **Mature prophetic ministry** is one of the foundational gifts for the church.
 - i. *Ephesians 2:20 (NIV84)* ...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.
 - ii. Some churches are built on the anointing or gift of the evangelist, pastor, or teacher.
 - 1. However, such a foundation is too small.
 - 2. This foundation can't sustain what God wants to build.
 - 3. The church is supposed to get built on the foundation of the apostolic (character, vision, power, and sending anointing) and the prophetic (what God has said and is saying to the church; prophetic insight).
- 4. **At Calvary, we see the impact of mature prophetic ministry through Pastor Steve in that we as a congregation (and beyond) are learning how to hear the voice of the Lord and to follow our Shepherd, the Lord Jesus.**
- 5. I give this short teaching on the prophetic because I want to honor Pastor Steve, who is our Prophetic Elder. And, I want to share an impression Pastor Steve got last Sunday, February 1.
 - a. Pastor Steve said: "It felt like in the Spirit that a page turned. Maybe a new chapter. Something moved us forward or gave us a new start as a congregation. The whole service was meaningful: worship, baptism, the testimony from Jane Winne (about the Lord touching a stroke victim), the sermon by Joshua Rushing (on *Ugly Worship*), and the stories during baptism."
 - b. "I felt [this impression] during baptism. 'A new chapter is beginning' is the best way to express."
 - c. "I think it has to do with evangelism... we are starting a new chapter in evangelism."
- 6. That word was very encouraging to me.
 - a. And, I was processing with the Lord on Wednesday when I got this explanation from Pastor Steve and on Thursday morning during corporate prayer.

This new chapter in evangelism is encouraging and fits in with our word for the year, Share the Story.

1. **I want each of us to be encouraged to *Share the Story* of what God is doing with other people** (1 John 1:1-4).
 - a. *1 John 1:1-4 (NIV84) 1 That which was from the beginning, 1) which we have heard, 2) which we have seen with our eyes, 3) which we have looked at [beheld], and 4) our hands have touched [experienced]—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.*
 - b. **We share the story of what we have seen, heard, beheld, and experienced of the Lord.**
2. **I want each of us to join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence.**
 - a. When we join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence together with others, **the ripple effects and impact are beyond comprehension.**
 - i. *Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV84) 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*
 - b. **Last Sunday, we baptized Ronni Bowman.**
 - c. I want each of us to join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence. When we join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence together with others, the ripple effects and impact are beyond comprehension.
3. **I want each of us to have faith that God takes our sharing and uses our stories to impact others, some of whom we could never imagine would get impacted** (John 4:18-30, 39-42).
 - a. **Here is the story of the woman at the well and the impact of her story.**
 - i. *John 4:28-30 (NIV84) 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. **Could this be the Christ?"** 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.*
 - ii. *John 4:39-42 (NIV84) 39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two*

days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers.
42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

- b. **Last Sunday, Joshua Ortiz got baptized. His story is amazing.**
 - c. **Our stories and example impact others.**
4. **I want each of us to catch the vision that God is at work all around us, in the lives of our family and friends, in our congregation, in our community, in our city, in our nation, and in the world.**
- a. The Lord Jesus is on mission everywhere.
 - b. We don't ask God to come and bless what we are doing.
 - c. We seek to discern what God is doing and where he is at work, and we seek to join the Lord on his mission.
 - d. **Last Sunday, we had the joy of baptizing Jonathan Carroll.** Here is his story of God never giving up on someone.
 - e. **God is at work all around us.**
5. **I want each of us to know what evangelism is.**
- a. **The word "evangelism" means sharing and showing good news.**
 - i. Three Greek word-groups were commonly used to denote evangelism: euangelizō ("to share good news"), kēryssō ("to preach") and martyreō ("to bear witness"). (Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.)
 - b. **The good news we share concerns the kingdom of God and what God has done, is doing, and will do.**
 - i. *Mark 1:14–15 (NIV84) 14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*
 - c. **Jesus proclaimed and demonstrated the good news of the kingdom of God in word and works.**
 - i. *Luke 4:17–19 (NIV84) 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*
 - d. **Jesus anoints his followers with the Holy Spirit to do what he has been doing and to say what he has been saying.**
 - i. Luke 9:1-2; 10:1-9; Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8.

6. **I want each of us to share with others, to risk, and to leave the results in God's hands.**
 - a. Don't get ahead or fall behind. Just stay in step with the Lord.
 - b. Don't try to get decisions. Rather love well, listen deeply, and trust the Holy Spirit completely.
 - c. Don't try to make something happen. Leave the results to God and stay connected as much as possible.
7. **I want each of us to change our mental model evangelism to see God at work helping people make a journey toward Christ.**
 - a. Let's talk about the **Centered Set** vs. the **Bounded Set**.
 - b. **The Bounded Set:**
 - i. We look at people and we see them as "either in or out."
 - ii. Either they belong or they don't belong.
 - iii. We draw the circle tighter and tighter concerning who is in and who is out based on whether they agree with us or not.
 - c. **The Centered Set:**
 - i. We look at people on a journey and see people as closer to the center, Christlikeness, or further from the center.
 - ii. A centered set is defined by its core values. People are not seen as in or out, but as closer or further away from the center.
 - iii. The core of a centered set is Christ, so our church is concerned with fostering increasing closeness to Jesus in the lives of all those involved.
 - iv. We believe that the closer one gets to the center, which is Christ, the more Christlike one's behavior should become.
 - v. As people get closer to Jesus, they will exhibit the features of Christ's radical lifestyle (love, generosity, healing, hospitality, forgiveness, mercy, peace, and more).
 - vi. Belonging is a key value. The growth toward the center of the set is the same as the process of discipleship. As people belong, they are becoming and believing.
 - vii. Becoming more Christlike is more likely to happen in community than in isolation.
 - viii. So, a bounded-set church and a centered-set church will think differently about evangelism.
 1. **Bounded set and evangelism:**
 - a. "We have to get people saved and to make a decision."
 - b. A person has to believe in the right things and become different in order to belong.
 - c. We see people as either in or out, not on a journey.

d. If a person won't believe right, we move on to the next person.

2. **Centered set:**

- a. God is at work everywhere and with everyone.
- b. We join God in his work helping people move closer to Christ.
- c. As people move closer to Christ, they come to a place of belief.
- d. The centered-set approach frees us from getting people to make a decision and encourages us to make disciples of Jesus.
- e. We stay connected to people because we see that God is at work; God is not finished with them yet in their journey.

Conclusion:

As I reflected on the sermon for today, I thought about Pastor Steve's word that we are starting a new chapter in evangelism, that our word for the year is **Share the Story**, that telling our stories impacts lives (individually and corporately), and that God is giving us a chance to share the story like we heard today.

May the Father help each of us by the power of the Spirit to share what we have seen, heard, beheld, and experienced of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ministry Time:

1. Pray for a new anointing for a new day.
2. Bless this prophetic word that we are starting a new chapter in evangelism, thanking the Lord for this encouragement and breakthrough.
3. As Jesus to break in, break through, and break out in new ways through us as a people of God.